

For was there not a British flag  
there, floating  
in the breeze ? Did it not say as plainly  
as words  
that this land was known, that it must  
figure in  
latitude and longitude on the English  
charts ?

And those guns they had heard the  
day before,  
who could say that they did not come  
from ships  
saluting the flag as they moved by ?  
Who could  
say that there was not some harbour on  
this coast,  
that there were not ships at anchor  
there at this  
very moment ?

And, even if this land were merely  
a small  
islet, would there be anything wonderful  
in Great  
Britain having, taken possession of it,  
when it lay  
on the confines of the Indian and the  
Pacific  
Oceans ? Alternatively, why should it  
not belong  
to the Australian continent, so little  
of which  
was known in this direction, which  
was part of  
the British dominions ?

As they talked a bird's cry rang out,  
followed by  
a rapid beating of wings.

It was Jenny's albatross, which had  
just taken  
flight, and was speeding away through  
the mists  
towards the north.

Whither was the bird going ?  
Towards some  
distant shore ?

Its departure produced a feeling of  
depression,  
even of anxiety. It seemed like a  
desertion,  
f But time was passing. The  
intermittent breeze  
was not strong enough to disperse the  
fog, whose